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SUBJECT: Bi-weekly Review - May 16 through May 31

DEPARTMENT OF STATE

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POLITICAL

Benson Election Void (UNCLASSIFIED)

T.O.S.BENSON, NCNC National Secretary and Chief Parliamentary Whip (Federal), lost his seat as a Federal House Representative for Lagos by virtue of a Supreme Court decision. The court voided Benson's election on the ground that one candidate's name had been improperly removed from the voting list. A new election will be held in Lagos sometime in June.

COMMENT (OFFICIAL USE ONLY)

Recently the Action Group has used the courts to remove two high-ranking NCNC representatives from the Federal House. Although H. O. DAVIES, whose election was nullified by an Ibadan judge in March, is legally prohibited from recontesting his seat, it is expected that Mr. Benson will repeat his victory in the forthcoming re-election.

AG Supports New States (UNCLASSIFIED)

In an Ibadan policy statement, the AG has announced that it supports the move to create additional Nigerian states at the 1956 constitutional revision. The AG press made it clear that the party would support the independence aspirations of the Benin/Delta area of the West and attacked Premier Nnamdi AZIKIWE for refusing to make a similar promise to the separatist provinces in the Eastern Region.

Calabar/Ogoja/Rivers State (UNCLASSIFIED)

A dissenting voice has been heard over the question of a separate state for the above-named three non-Ibo provinces in the Eastern Region. A meeting of representatives from Ogoja Province, including 9 members of the Federal and 13 members of the Eastern

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House, resolved that Ogoja would not join the two maritime provinces in a unified independence movement (D-147, p.4, Mar.18 1955). The conference announcement made it clear, however, that the Ogoja separatists were not satisfied with their present status and proposed to petition that the province be made a separate state in 1956.

COMMENT (OFFICIAL USE ONLY)

One of the principle spokesmen was Federal Minister M.T.MBU, who is presently replacing R.A.NJOKU as Acting Federal Minister of Trade and Industry while the latter is travelling in the UK. Mbu is not in the best graces of the NCNC, which during the recent conference at Ibadan resolved to have a commission of inquiry investigate the Minister's role in the bye-election loss of an Eastern House seat to the AG. Apparently the official NCNC candidate was inimical to Mbu who supported a man of his own choice and effectively split the NCNC vote.

Northern Chiefs to Meet (OFFICIAL USE ONLY)

A meeting of principal Moslem Emirs is to be held in Kaduna June 7-8. Although no mention was made of the meeting's agenda, the meeting is an indication that even the Northern traditional chieftains, who have far more political power than their counterparts in other regions, are not immune to the trend of increased political power being transferred to the hands of Federal or Regional ministers of the Balewa type (see D-171,p.2, May 16, 1955). They will also probably discuss the legislative program to be brought before the August meeting of the Northern House.

Northern Legislatures' August Meetings (UNCLASSIFIED)

It has been announced that the Northern House of Assembly will open on August 8 and that the Region's House of Chiefs will sit one week later.

COMMENT (UNCLASSIFIED)

The opening date of the August session of the Federal House has not yet been set, although Government spokesmen hope that it can be convened on or before August 15.

West's Representation in 1956 (UNCLASSIFIED)

NCNC National Secretary Kola BALOGUN, now Acting Federal Minister of Labor and Welfare while Chief F. S. OKOTIE-EBOH, attends the ILO Conference at Geneva, has issued a statement concerning his party's position with regard to the Western Region's

representation

representation at the 1956 Constitutional Conference. Balogun stated that if the Western Region does not hold Regional elections early next year, the AG and NCNC should nominate an equal number of delegates to represent the Region at the Conference.

COMMENT (OFFICIAL USE ONLY)

Balogun's statement marks the first recent NCNC pronouncement concerning the political future of the West. Immediately after the party's sweep of the Region in December 1954, NCNC leaders expressed confidence that AG rule would be short-lived and that only the NCNC could speak for the West in 1956. Recently there have been rumors, probably NCNC-inspired, to the effect that the Western Government will dissolve its Regional House and hold new elections in June of 1956.

Comey Subsidy Bill (UNCLASSIFIED)

The Eastern House of Assembly enacted a bill providing that Comey subsidies will henceforth be paid to Local Authorities rather than to individuals. These subsidies were established by treaties between the predecessors of the United Africa Company and local chiefs in Calabar and Rivers Provinces during the 18th and 19th centuries. When the British Government assumed formal administration of the area, the treaties were validated by the Government and annual subsidies amounting to approximately £50,000 have continued to be paid to the decendents of the chiefs. Since the treaties' raison d'etre has long since disappeared and much of the subsidy provides a continual source of litigation between contending claimants, both the Federal and Regional Government have long advocated the discontinuance of the payments.

COMMENT (OFFICIAL USE ONLY)

Although the Comey subsidies are clearly anachronistic, Azikiwe and his government exhibited rare delicacy in presenting and maneuvering passage of the bill. The opposition and representatives from the maritime provinces had little base for argument other than the legalistic stand that valid treaties could not be denounced by one party thereto. In an effort to placate discontented NCNC constituents in the politically sensitive seaport areas, Zik made three speeches during consideration of the bill and accepted three or four amendments of minor points.

WHO Opens Lagos Office (UNCLASSIFIED)

The World Health Organization has recently established a Regional West African Office at Lagos. Dr. KAREFA-SMART, a U.S.-trained Nigerian who until recently was WHO representative at Brazzaville, French Equatorial Africa, will have jurisdiction over Liberia and all British, French, Spanish, Portuguese and U.N. Trust territories in West Africa. His wife is an American citizen.

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LABOR

Minister of Labor Visits London (UNCLASSIFIED)

Chief F.S. OKOTIE-EBOH, Federal Minister of Labor and Welfare, is spending a week in London prior to the ILO Conference at Geneva, (D-171, p.5). The Minister is scheduled to meet with representatives of the British Trade Unions Congress to explore possible ways in which the TUC might assist the Nigerian labor organization.

COMMENT (OFFICIAL USE ONLY)

The Minister, whose qualifications for public office are lamentably lacking, has scant knowledge of or interest in labor affairs. Presumably any serious discussions will be conducted by Mr. G. FOGGON, The Minister's private secretary and Nigerian Commissioner of Labor.

Move to Merge Western Unions (UNCLASSIFIED)

The Western Regional Department of Labor has proposed an amalgamation of all trade unions in the Region. Introduced as a measure to strengthen the union movement and to provide unified consolidation on important labor issues, the amalgamation is scheduled to be initiated among unions in each locality.

COMMENT (OFFICIAL USE ONLY)

The move appears to be an AG-sponsored effort to eliminate ANTUF as the central union representative in the Western Region. It also implies that while the AG wishes to destroy ANTUF for political reasons, it is unwilling to publicly endorse the rival Committee of Trade Unions (CTU) (D-171, p.5).

EDUCATION

Effort to Establish a "University of Nigeria". (UNCLASSIFIED)

The Eastern House of Assembly has approved a Government bill establishing a university in the Eastern Region. Speaking on behalf of the bill, the American-trained Eastern Minister of Education, I.U.AKPABIO, stated that the magnitude of Nigeria's post-secondary educational requirements could not be met by the facilities existent or planned by the University College at Ibadan. He felt that the Region should do all in its power to train its own people locally and that overseas institutions should be resorted to only for post graduate work of highly specialized training. The Minister explained that the school had been purposefully named the University of Nigeria since the Eastern Region Government hoped that it would be a force for Nigerian unity and would serve all Regions of the country. To this end, he stated that provision had been made for the University Council to contain representatives appointed by the Federal and other Regional Governments. He made it clear, however, that funds would be supplied only by the Eastern Region.

The University will have six faculties offering degree courses: arts, sciences, medicine, law, engineering and theology. In addition, there will be 20 institutes offering diploma courses at the post-graduate or post-secondary level (e.g., agriculture, forestry, veterinary science).

Press comment from other than NCNC papers was unanimously unfavorable. The independent and influential Daily Times editorially labelled the plan "visionary" and doubted that the Eastern Government possessed sufficient financial resources to establish a university.

COMMENT (OFFICIAL USE ONLY)

Apparently one of the prime movers of the project has been Dr. Horace Mann BOND, President of Lincoln University, Pennsylvania. Eastern leaders have indicated that they envisage close ties with American universities and have hinted broadly that the university will receive substantial American financial support.

East Bans Communist Teachers (OFFICIAL USE ONLY)

The Eastern Ministry of Education has circularized a notice to all private schools receiving government support to the effect that state funds will be withdrawn from those schools which continue to employ Communist teachers after December 31, 1955.

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COMMENT (OFFICIAL USE ONLY)

Apparently the background of the notice was a circular from the Federal Government's Security Office requesting that the Regional Governments endeavor to remove such teachers. (Regulations are currently in force banning Communist sympathizers from employment in government schools.) In a typically Nigerian maneuver, the Eastern leaders saw an opportunity to kill a political bird while complying with the Federal request. The announcement is aimed at Aggrey College, operated by Alvan OKOKU, whose two sons are partyline followers, but, more important to the Eastern Government, are in strong opposition to the NCNC. (D-19, July 31, 1954, p.1).

Extremely loosely worded, the announcement has drawn considerable press criticism as to the criteria to be employed in determining Communist sympathies and what body is to be charged with the responsibility for making such determination.

Lagos Chief Urges Improved Moslem Education (UNCLASSIFIED)

Oba Adeniyi ADELE II, Paramount Chief of Lagos, in a speech to several thousand Lagos Moslems at the feast of Eid-El-Fitri, suggested that a school of Arabic studies be included in the Federal Government's educational establishment. The Oba stated that too few Moslems were receiving post secondary education and that the Moslems required a center which could provide advanced study in the religion's tradition.

ECONOMIC

Eastern Development Plan (UNCLASSIFIED)

The most important subject considered by the second session of the Eastern House of Assembly was a Government White Paper entitled "Outline of Development Plan 1955-60" which authorized £5.2 million for development purposes. In introducing the Paper, Premier Azikiwe stressed that the plan was aimed at the improvement of the Region's rural areas, with primary emphasis on water supplies (£1,750,000), roads (£804,000), health schemes (£500,000), education (£1,000,000), and fishery and veterinary services (£300,000). Government spokesmen admitted the sketchiness of the Paper but emphasized that submission in its present form was necessary to obtain the legislature's early approval so that the Colonial Office could release the £2.75 million recently allocated to the Region as a colonial development grant (D-171, p.7)

Opposition spokesmen complained that the 5-year total was patently inadequate for the Region's needs, amounting to only 14 shillings per capita. In answer, Finance Minister OJIKE stated that the plan was in addition to the £7 million FY 1956 appropriation bill passed last month, and that the per capita allocation of the two bills would be 34 shillings compared with an estimated per capita Regional income of 22-25 shillings.

COMMENT (UNCLASSIFIED)

Although the UK grant will finance approximately 65% of the plan (£2 3/4 million from the 1955 grant and £700,000 residuals from former grants), the Eastern Government will be hard-pressed to find the remaining funds. The Paper indicates that £1 1/4 million will be drawn from general revenue.

Lagos Railway Terminal Opens (UNCLASSIFIED)

Mr. Abubakar Tafawa BALEWA, Federal Minister of Transport, officially opened a new £400,000 railway passenger terminal at Lagos. Under construction for three years, the new terminal is part of the Railway's modernization plan and will be matched by a companion station expected to open at Ibadan during June.

COMMENT (UNCLASSIFIED)

The AG press criticized the terminal as a costly example of "19th century architecture and thinking" and remarked that rail passenger accomodations in Nigeria were such that most travellers preferred any alternate means of transportation.

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International Conference on Navigation of Benue (UNCLASSIFIED)

Technical experts of Nigeria and the French Cameroons met in Lagos to discuss navigational improvements on the Benue River. Addressing the conference, Minister Balewa stressed the importance to both countries of increased river traffic.

COMMENTS (OFFICIAL USE ONLY)

A Government spokesman had informed the Consulate General that in this year's meeting the French representatives were completely cooperative in revealing their plans for improvement of the upper Benue, but that conferees were still far from anything approaching the Nigerian goal of an international river planning commission.

Further meetings are scheduled to be held at Lokoja in December 1955 and at Delft Netherlands or Paris in March 1956. By the time of the latter conference it is expected that the Netherlands Engineering Co. (NEDECO), which is currently surveying the river for the Nigerian Government, will have completed its report.

MISCELLANEOUS OFFICE ACTIVITIES

Changes in USIS Staff (UNCLASSIFIED)

Mr. Harry K. MANIGIAN, Formerly assigned to USIA Washington, has assumed the duties of Public Affairs Officer, Lagos.

Mr. John THOMPSON has arrived to take charge of the USIS office in Ibadan which is expected to open on August 1. The Ibadan office, which will be responsible for Nigeria's Western Region, will be the first U.S. Government office to operate outside the Federal capital of Lagos.

Edward D. McLaughlin
American Consul General

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